

Bedford Rifle Club

The first 75 years

1929 – 2004

1929

The Club was reformed on **20th March 1929**.

It was originally called "**Bedford Miniature Rifle Club**".

The original membership was 12 members each paying an annual subscription of 5s 0d.

The Club first used a range under St. Paul's Square (below the then Town Hall) in Bedford but moved to the Drill Hall in Ashburnham Road, Bedford in the first year.

Also, in the first year of shooting, 6 shooters scored "100" on league cards and overall there were 20 "possibles" (100).

The "A" Team won the County Summer League Division 1 with one member winning the County Silver Medal.

Five members of the Club were in the County B.S.A. XX Team and five members were in the Bedfordshire Queen Alexander Team (team of six) that came 3rd.

Bob Hartop's first car (Armstrong Siddeley) was made in this year.

Col. Salmond shot for England and also captained the Great British Dewar team Vs America.

1930

Once again, Col. Salmond shot for England and also captained the Great British Dewar team Vs America.

1931

Brian Hall shot in the Dewar Team scoring 394 and he also competed in the first Pershing Match (shot against America) scoring 393 (5th).

In this year, the Club allowed Ladies to become members.

1932

Col. Salmond captained the English Team.

Brian Hall won the Grand Aggregate at the National Scottish Meeting at Largs with a score of 1403, scoring 400 ex 400 in the last competition.

He also won the County Medal Holders Gold Medal (for S.M.R.C. County Silver Medal Holders).

1936

Col. Salmond captained the Great Britain Dewar Team Vs America.

1939

The Club thought the "Franklin Field" site was unsuitable on which to build a range but some club members thought the "Franklin Brickwork" site opposite would be suitable.

1940

This was the year that the Club changed its name to "**Bedford Rifle Club**".

The cost of ammunition was 2s 0d per 50 rounds.

1946

Bob Hartop joined Bedford Rifle Club scoring 998 and 999 ex 1000 in Club and County Leagues within 6 months of joining.

The annual subscription was doubled from 5s 0d to 10s 0d to raise funds to pay for an Outdoor Range.

1952

The annual subscriptions went up from 10s 0d to 15s 0d and the cost of ammunition was 3s 3d per 50 rounds.

1953

The Club badge was introduced after a competition to design a new badge.

W. Goodwin won the competition.



1954

The Bedford Rifle Club "A" Team (D. Burnapp, R.W. Hartop, W.T. Marchant and C. Turner) won the B.S.S.A Short Range League (scoring 3990 ex 4000 in the ten matches) and the County Championship Team competitions.

1958

Bedford Rifle Club was asked by the NSRA to try out the new 10-spot 25 yard cards which were then adopted for league shooting later that year.

1961

Shooting jackets cost £5 12s 6d.

1962

Club Affiliation to the NSRA was 1 guinea for up to 20 members; 2 guineas for 20-40 members and 3 guineas for over 40 members.

County Associations paid 3 guineas whilst Life Membership of the NSRA was 30 guineas.

The annual subscription was increased from 15s 0d to £1 and the cost of ammunition was now 8s 1d per 50 rounds.

Bedford Rifle Club won the National Team Handicap competition.

1965

Bedford Rifle Club won its first Bisley Team Competition winning the "City of London" Cup.

The Club also won the National Short-Range Division 1 League.

Whilst shooting in this league, the "A" Team scored 500 ex 500 in two rounds (British Record). The Team dropped 11 points out of 5000 in the ten matches.

Bedford Rifle Club also won the British Team of Eight Knockout competition (Mackworth Praed) with a score of 794.

In the same year, negotiations began for the land on which to build the Outdoor Range.

The annual subscription went up from £1 to £2.
Tenex cost 8s 8d and Expert cost 6s 0d per 50 rounds.

The Club decided they needed to raise £60 to build the Outdoor Range and £25 for rent.

The NSRA offered £50 towards the costs provided that the club used the NSRA for its supplies.

The Drill Hall cost £26 per year to hire.

The NSRA changed the rules on trigger weights: the minimum trigger weight was adjusted from 3lbs. to 1.1lbs. (However for safety reasons the NSRA stressed that triggers did not need to change to the lighter weight).

The NSRA annual membership was now 12s 6d and Life Membership was £10 10s 0d.

In International Competitions, the rules stated that only ammunition costing less than \$25 (US) per 1000 on the "open market" could be used in matches.

1966

Bedford Rifle Club won the British Team of Four Knockout competition (Burrough and Watts) with a score of 788.

They also won the British Team of Eight Knockout competition (Mackworth Praed) for the second year running.

Seven members of Bedford Rifle Club (together with two members of Britannia and one member of the Bedfordshire Police Rifle Club) helped Bedford win the "Provincial Cities and Boroughs Trophy" with a score of 3912 ex 4000 (12 points ahead of the next team).

1967

On **1st April** Bedford Rifle Club signed the lease for the "Franklin Brickwork" site.

The lease was for 14 years and the rent was £25 per year.

Club Affiliation to the NSRA was now 2 guineas for up to 20 members; 4 guineas for 20-40 members and 6 guineas for over 40 members whilst County Associations paid 6 guineas.

1968

Harry Smallwood fired the first shot on the new 100 yards Outdoor Range.

On **28th June** John Flynn won the British Long Range Championships (The Earl Roberts) with a score of 789.

John suffered from a bad cold before the competition which he treated with a "large dose of rum"!

Bedford Rifle Club won the British County Team competition at Bisley (The Astor) and the National Short Range League Division 1.

1969

Bedford Rifle Club extended the lease for a further 42 years and extended the area under the lease to include the land for the indoor range.

The rent was increased by £8 to include this land.

Bedford Rifle Club also got permission from the Water Board to build an Indoor Range.

The original proposal was to build a 3 or 6 firing point range with a clubroom, with an estimated cost of £10,000.

Bedford Rifle Club held its first invitation match on the Outdoor Range.

Tenex ammunition cost £8 8s 0d per 1,000 rounds; Match ammunition cost £6 per 1,000 rounds and ten 10-spot 25 yards targets cost 5d.

In this year the Club sent a telescope to the NSRA to repair under the insurance policy, however they were informed that the telescope had not been manufactured since 1913 and therefore would send the money for a second-hand scope (£3 10s 0d).

They accepted this offer provided they could have the scope back to use as spares for the other club scopes!

The constitution of Bedford Rifle Club was redrafted so that the Club could apply to become a Charity.

Bedford Rifle Club won the National Metric League Division 1, dropping only 15 points ex 10,000 (with 2 rounds scoring 1000 ex 1000).

1970

In June, Bedford Rifle Club became a Charity.

The price of Tenex ammunition was now £8 10s 0d per 1,000 rounds.

1973

Bedford Rifle Club won the British Team of Eight Knockout competition (Mackworth Praed).

1974

In the Commonwealth Games, Frank Balcombe represented England in the 50 metre Prone Pairs and Individual competitions.

Bedford Rifle Club won the British Team of Six Knockout competition (News of the World) with a score of 1178.

Tenex ammunition cost £15.80 per 1,000 rounds; Match ammunition cost £10.35 per 1,000 rounds and ten 10-spot 25 yards targets cost 20p.

1978

This was the year when Bedford Rifle Club joined forces with the Bedfordshire County Rifle & Pistol Association (BCR&PA) to build the Indoor Range.

The Club annual subscriptions were now £25.

Bedford Rifle Club won the Eastern Region Sports Council Award for Services to Sport.

1979

Bedford Rifle Club entered a junior team of three (R. Shepherd, M. Barnicott and M. Everett) and won the Junior Team competition for the first time at Bisley.

The cost of a rifle ranged from £30 for a second-hand rifle to £450 for a new top of the range International rifle.

1982

Bedford Rifle Club won the British Team of Eight Knockout competition (Mackworth Praed) with a score of 1561.

They also won the British Team of Four Knockout competition (Burrough & Watts) with a score of 786.

However the Club lost to St. Nicholas by 2 points in the final of the British Team of Six Knockout competition with a score of 1176.

They also came second in the "Provincial Cities and Boroughs Trophy" with a score of 3923 (St. Albans scored 3925)

The Bedford "A" Team (E.J. Hands, J. Duguid, A. Campbell, D. Dean and J. MacKay) scored a maximum of 500 ex 500 in one round of the Midland League.

1983

Bedford won the "Provincial Cities and Boroughs Trophy" for a second time (with all team members from Bedford Rifle Club) with a score of 3936 – scoring 1976 ex 2000 in the second stage (British Record).

This was 12 points ahead of the next team, Edinburgh.

1984

Bedford again won the "Provincial Cities and Boroughs Trophy" with a score of 3929 (2 points ahead of Wick).

1985

Bedford Rifle Club had two teams in the Quarter-final of the British Team of Four Knockout competition (Burrough & Watts) but lost both matches.

However, the Club won the British Team of Eight Knockout competition (Mackworth Praed) with a score of 1578 (K. Howlett scoring 200 ex 200).

1987

Bryan Tye scored 400 ex 400 in the "Provincial Cities and Boroughs Trophy" competition.

Bedford Rifle Club won the Spooner competition at Bisley with a score of 1579 ex 1600 and was second in both the Week and Weekend Team Aggregate competitions.

1988

Bedford Rifle Club Team (T. Fitzjohn, J. Duguid, R.G. Hartop, B. Tye, D. Dean, A. Campbell, R. Carter and F. Balcombe) won the British Team of Eight Knockout competition (Mackworth Praed) with a score of 1579 tying with South Wales Switch-gear but winning on the re-gauge 1562 to 1554.

The Club also beat South Wales Switch-gear in the British Team of Six Knockout competition (News of the World) with a score of 1192.

Bedford "A" Team won the National Short Range League Division 1, scoring 23 "tons" on 45 cards with Jim Duguid scoring 999 ex 1000 (average 99.9)

Bedford Rifle Club won the "City of London" League Division 1 for the first time.

The Bedford Juniors won the NSRA "Sir Phillip Richardson Challenge" Trophy.

This was also the year when Bedford Rifle Club and the BCR&PA built the Air-weapons and 50 metre Range.

1989

The NSRA introduced new targets for 25 yards, 50 metres and 100 yards to bring the NSRA targets in-line with International targets.

1990

Bedford Ladies won the National Women's Short Range League Division 1.

Andrew Campbell won the Grand Aggregate competition at Bisley with a score of 2710 ex 2800.

He also won the British Long Range Championship (The Earl Roberts) scoring 782 ex 800.

1992

Bedford Ladies once again, won the National Women's Short Range League Division 1.

Bedford Rifle Club beat Twickenham by one point to win the British County Team competition at Bisley (The Astor) with a score of 2301 ex 2400.

The Club also won the Week and Weekend Team Aggregate competitions and the Spooner competition (the "B" Team (dropping 48 points) beating the "A" Team (dropping 54 points).

Thus Bedford Rifle Club won four out of five Bisley Team competitions.

1993

Bedford Ladies won the National Women's Short Range League Division 1.

The Bedford "A" Team scored 500 ex 500 in one round of the National Short Range League.

Bedford Rifle Club won the 100 yards Team competition at the Scottish Meeting (the New Zealand Trophy) with a score of 1551 ex 1600.

The Club also won the "City of London" and the Grand Aggregate Team competitions at Bisley.

1994

The 100 yards firing point canopy blew down in a storm.

Bedford Rifle Club won the Week and Weekend Team Aggregate and the Spooner competitions.

The Club won the National Long Range League Division 1.

At the Commonwealth Games, Bedford Rifle Club had three members who competed in the Games.

Susan Hartop (Day) represented Wales in the Women's 50 metres Prone and 3-Positional competitions and 10 metres Air Rifle (Pairs and Individual competitions).

Tony Lincoln represented England in the 50 metres Prone Pairs and Individual competitions.

Chris Hector won the Gold Medal in the 10 metres Air Rifle Individual and Pairs competitions (with Nigel Wallace) and won a Bronze Medal in the 50 metres 3-Positional Pairs competition (with Trevor Langridge).

1995

Early in the year the 100 yards firing point canopy was replaced.

Jim Duguid won the British Short Range Championship (News of the World) tying with Tony Lincoln, with a score of 394 but winning the competition on the re-gauge 393 to 392.

At Bisley, Bedford Rifle Club won the Week Team Aggregate, the Spooner and the Astor competitions and came second in the Weekend Team Aggregate and the "City of London" competitions.

Jason Simmcock won the British 3-Positional Championship with a score of 1132.

The Bedford "A" Team recorded a British Record in the National 50 metres League with a score of 1982 ex 2000.

1996

Bedford Rifle Club recorded a British Record in the Team of Three 50 metres competition at the National Scottish Meeting with a score of 1182 ex 1200.

The Club also won the Grand Aggregate Team competition at the National Scottish Meeting.

The same year also saw the Club winning the Week Team Aggregate competition at Bisley for the fifth time in a row as well as winning the "City of London" competition.

The Club also won the National Long Range League Division 1.

1997

Bedford Rifle Club beat Stirling in the final of the British Team of Six Knockout competition with a score of 1176 ex 1200 to win the News of the World.

At the Scottish National Meeting, the Club won the Lord Forteviot Challenge and The New Zealand Challenge Trophies as well as the Grand Aggregate Team competitions.

1998

The Club was invited to the Marsden & King Invitation Shoot (a competition for those clubs that have won the National Long Range League Division 1).

Bedford won this match with a score of 1959 ex 2000.

David Brownridge stated that this was “the best year” he has had as Captain.

Bedford Rifle Club won the National Short Range League Division 1.

The Club won the British Team of Eight Knockout competition (Mackworth Praed) beating E. U. Alumini with a score of 1567 to 1563.

The Club also won the National Long Range League Division 1, winning all ten matches.

At Bisley, the Bedford Rifle Club won the Week and Weekend Team Aggregate competitions and the “City of London” competition.

Two Bedford Rifle Club members (Chris Hector and Neil Day) represented England at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Neil Day won a Silver Medal in the 50 metres Prone Pairs competition (with Phil Scallon).

Chris Hector defended his Pairs (with Nigel Wallace) and Individual 10 metres Air Rifle titles.

John Smithurst won the first Combined Scottish and Bisley Aggregate competition to win the John Pearman Trophy.

Neil Day came 3rd in the British Long Range Championship but won the English Long Range Championship.

1999

Neil Day won the British Long Range Championship (The Earl Roberts) scoring 777 ex 800 then 193 in a tie shoot.

The Club won the Marsden & King Invitation Shoot with a score of 1955 ex 2000.

David Brownridge stepped down as Captain of Bedford Rifle Club, after 30 years.

2000

Neil Day won the NSRA British ISSF 50 metres Prone competition.

2001

Jim Duguid won the British Short Range Championship. (News of the World).

Bedford Rifle Club won the National Short Range League Division 1.

Neil Day won the Grand Aggregate competition at Bisley.

Bedford won the Astor.

2002

Bedford Rifle Club won the National Short Range League Division 1 with Neil Day scoring 998 ex 1000 (to average 99.8).

The Club also won the Long Range and 50 metres Division 1 Leagues.

Tony Lincoln won the Grand Aggregate competition at the Scottish Shoot and the Bedford Rifle Club won three out of the four Team competitions.

Neil Day won the Grand Aggregate competition again with a winning score of 2753 ex 2800.

Whilst winning the Grand Aggregate, Neil also won 11 National Trophies including the Combined Scottish and Bisley Aggregate competition (the John Pearman Trophy).

Neil Day then went on to win the County Champions Championship at Bisley.

At Bisley Bedford Rifle Club won the Grand Aggregate Team, the Spooner and the Astor competitions.

Neil Day also represented England at the Manchester Commonwealth Games, held at Bisley, winning a Gold Medal in the 50 metres Prone Pairs competition (with Mike Babb).

Neil Day became the Bedford "Sports Personality" for **2002/2003**.

2003

Tony Lincoln won the Grand Aggregate competition at the National Scottish Meeting winning 7 trophies including scoring 795 ex 800 at 50 metres.

The Club the Club won three out of four Team competitions at the National Scottish Meeting.

Tony also won the Combined Scottish and Bisley Aggregate competition (the John Pearman Trophy) and finished 3rd in the Grand Aggregate at Bisley.

Neil Day won the NSRA British ISSF 50 metres Prone competition.

At Bisley the Bedford Rifle Club won the Grand Aggregate Team, the Spooner and the "City of London" competitions.

2004

Tenex ammunition cost £130 per 1,000 rounds; Match ammunition cost £84 per 1,000 rounds and ten 10-spot 25 yards targets cost £1.

The annual subscription of the Club was now at £135.

Club Achievements

National League Division 1:

National Short Range = 5 wins

National Women's = 3 wins

National Metric = 1 win

National Long Range = 4 wins

National 50 metres = 1 win

National Knockout Competitions:

Provincial City and Boroughs (team of 10) = 3 wins

Mackworth Praed (team of 8) = 7 wins

News of the World (team of 6) = 3 wins

Burrough and Watts (team of 4) = 2 wins

Bisley Team Competitions:

The Astors = 5 wins

The Week Grand Aggregate = 8 wins

The Weekend Grand Aggregate = 6 wins

The Spooner = 6 wins

The City of London = 5 wins

Top Team Scores on current targets "1989"

National Leagues:

Short Range 500 ex 500 (British Record)

Women's Short Range 395 ex 400

Standing and Kneeling 557 ex 600

10 metres Air Rifle 564 ex 600

6 yards Air Rifle 578 ex 600

10 metres Air Pistol 560 ex 600

6 yards Air Pistol 578 ex 600

Long Range 1968 ex 2000

Any-sights 1969 ex 2000

50 metres 1980 ex 2000 (British Record)

3 – Positional 1667 ex 1800

Knockout Team Scores:

794 ex 800 in the Burrough and Watts

1184 ex 1200 in the News of the World

793 ex 800 in the Mackworth Praed (British Record)

1961 ex 2000 in one stage of the Provincial City and Boroughs (British Record)

Individual Achievements

John Flynn, Andrew Campbell and Neil Day have been the British Long Range Champion (Earl Roberts)

Jason Simmcock has been the British 3-Positional Champion at Bisley

Jim Duguid has been the National Short Range Champion (News of the World)

Chris Hector has been the British 10 metre Air Rifle Champion and holds the British Record

Neil Day has been the National ISSF 50 metre Prone Champion

Chris Hector has been the National ISSF 3-Positional 50 metre Champion

Andrew Campbell and Neil Day have won the Grand Aggregate at Bisley

Brian Hall, John Smithurst and Tony Lincoln have won the Scottish Meeting Grand Aggregate

Brian Hall has won the County Gold Medal

Neil Day has won the County Champion Championship at Bisley

Brian Hall shot in the first Pershing Match in 1931

Frank Balcombe has shot in the Pershing Match

Tony Lincoln and Jim Duguid have shot in the Roberts Match

Jean Lorimer, Julie Betteridge and Susan Hartop (Day) have shot in the Randal Match

Frank Balcombe, Tony Lincoln, Susan Hartop, Chris Hector and Neil Day have competed in the Commonwealth Games

Chris Hector has won Gold Medals for Individual and Pairs Air Rifle competitions and Bronze Medals for 3-Positional competitions at the Commonwealth Games

Neil Day has won Gold and Silver Medals for the 50 metre Prone Pairs competitions at the Commonwealth Games

Jeff Stultiens has won the Tiger Trophy competition for Air Pistol at 20 yards

Top Individual Scores

Brian Hall scored 400 ex 400 in a National Meeting (Largs) in **1933** (British Record)

Neil Day scored 2753 ex 2800 to win the Grand Aggregate at Bisley

Tony Lincoln scored 795 ex 800 at 50 metres at the Scottish Meeting

Neil Day averaged 99.8 in the National Short Range League

Bryan Tye scored 400 ex 400 in the Provincial City and Boroughs

Chris Hector scored 194 ex 200 in the Short Range Standing and Kneeling League

Chris Bedwell scored 196 ex 200 in the National 10 metres Air Rifle League

Tom Barron scored 200 ex 200 in the National 6 yards Air Rifle League

Jeff Stultiens scored 192 ex 200 in the National 10 metres Air Pistol League

John Marchant scored 190 ex 200 in the National 6 yards Air Pistol League

Andrew Campbell and Neil Day scored 400 ex 400 in the National Long Range League

Neil Day scored 400 ex 400 in the National 50 metres League

Jim Duguid scored 200 ex 200 in the National Winter 50 metres League

Chris Fordham scored 399 ex 400 in the National Any-Sights (Dewar) League

Jim Duguid scored 200 ex 200 in the 50 metres Any-Sights League

Chris Hector scored 582 ex 600 in the National 3-Positional League

Re-produced from the original booklet:

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